TF RAKKASAN
OPERATION ANACONDA

THE BATTLE OF SHAH-I-KOT VALLEY

2 - 13 MARCH 2002

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

AREA OF OPERATIONS / INTEREST

ENEMY SITUATION

BRIGADE MISSION

BRIGADE COMMANDER'S INTENT

TASK ORGANIZATION

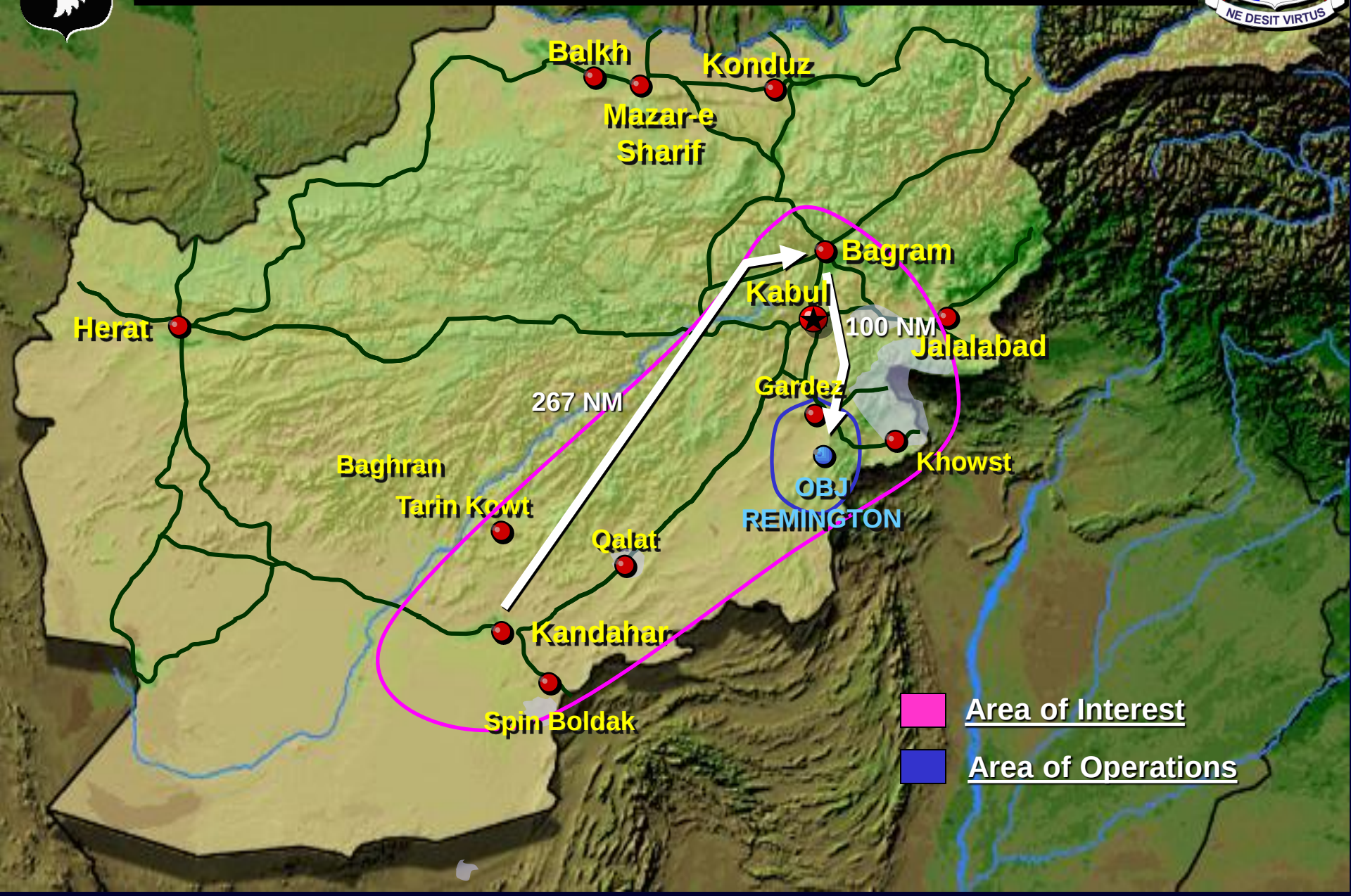
CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION

THE BATTLE: DAY-BY-DAY

LESSONS LEARNED

CONCLUSION

AREA OF OPERATIONS/ AREA OF INTEREST



DISTANCES: A PERSPECTIVE

NEW YORK

New York, NY

300 Miles

Bagram, AFG

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia, PA

100 Miles

OBJ
REMINGTON

Richmond, VA

Kandahar, AFG

Lexington, KY

Herat, AFG

300 Miles

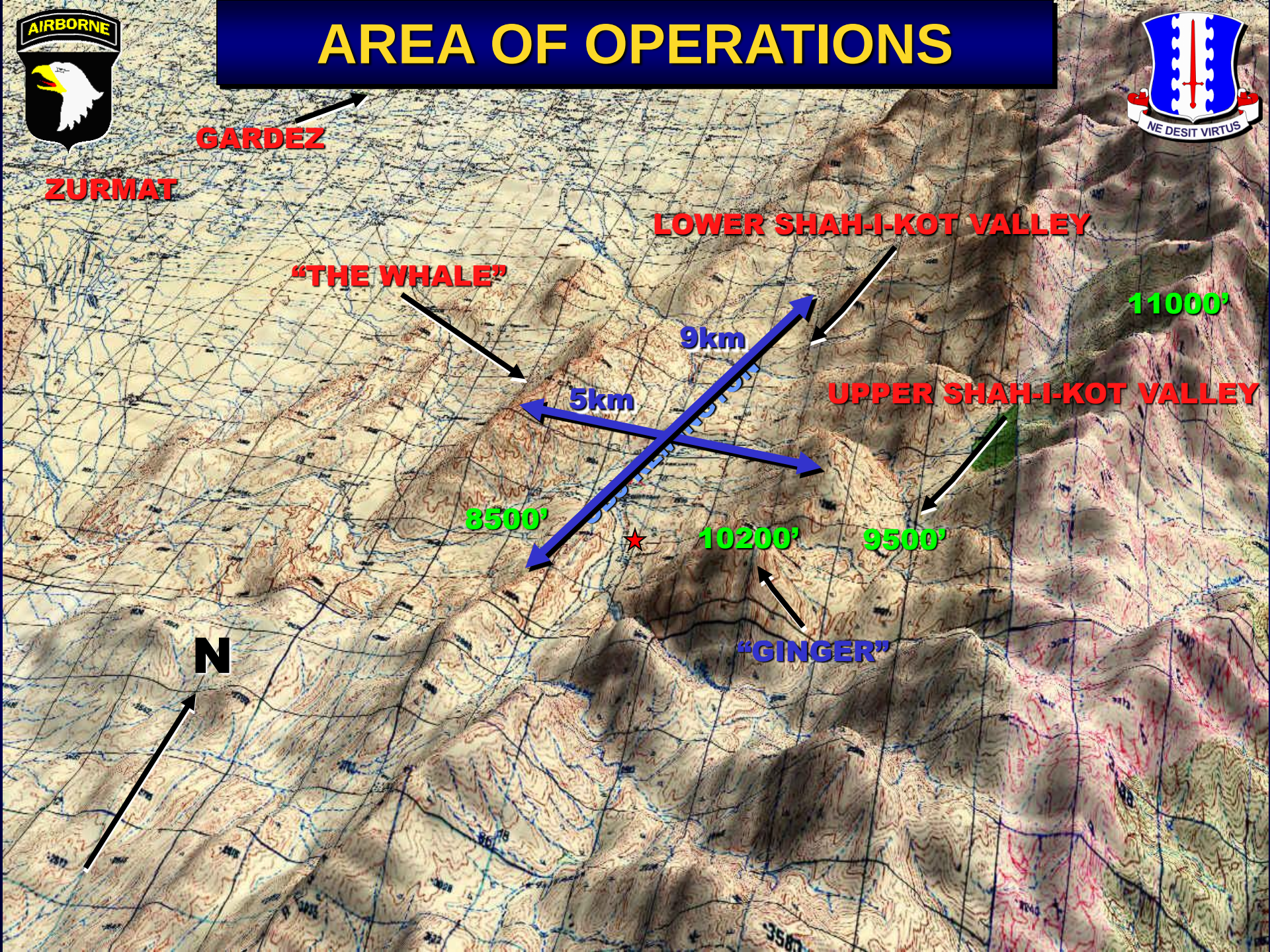
KENTUCKY

250 Miles

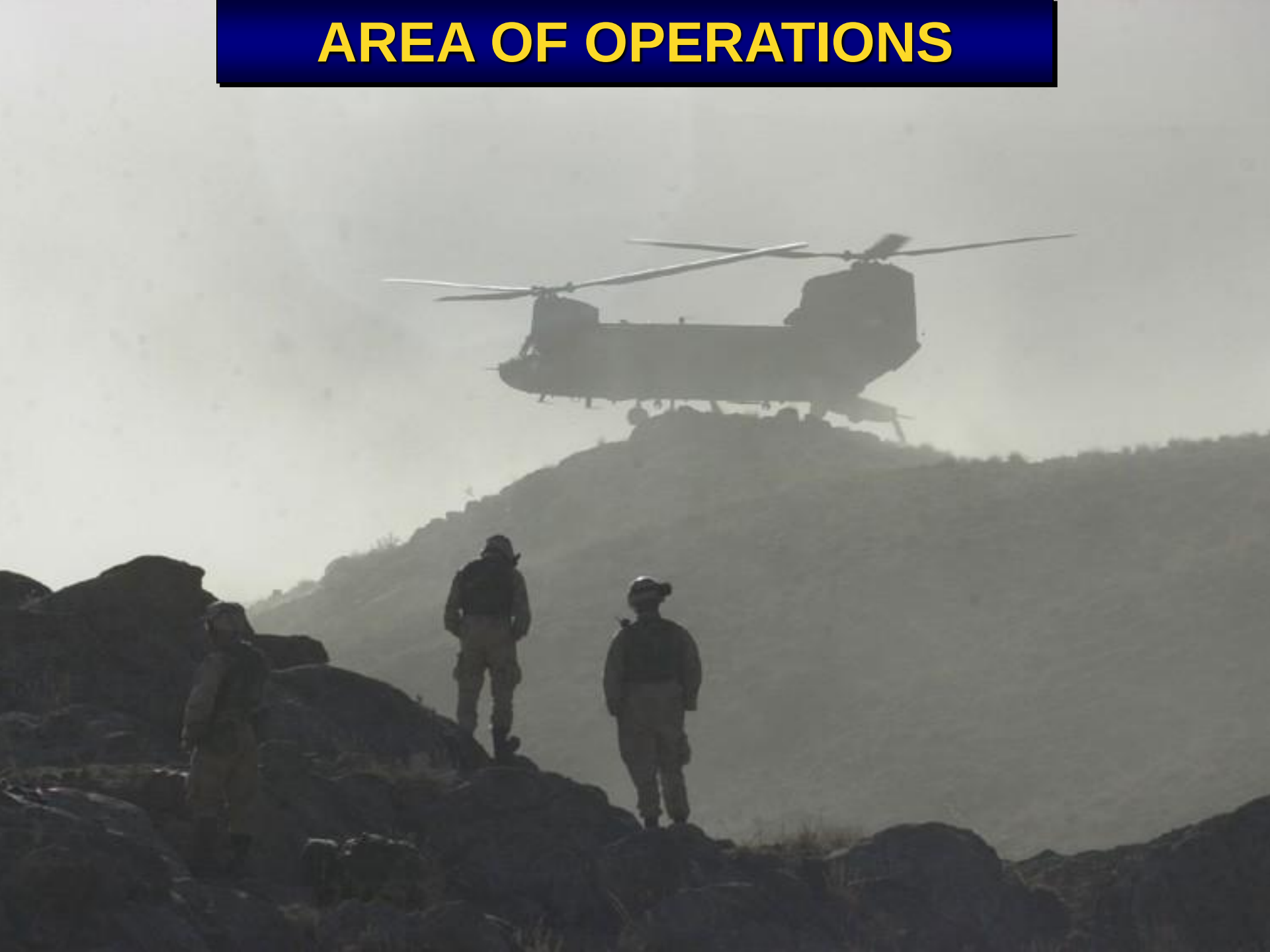
Wilmington, NC

Jacobabad, PK

AREA OF OPERATIONS



AREA OF OPERATIONS



AREA OF OPERATIONS

THE ENEMY

- 82mm MORTAR: USED FOR HIGH VALUE TARGETS SUCH AS COVERING POTENTIAL LZS, AVENUES OF APPROACH, AND SUPPORTING FIRE ON TARGETS WITHIN A KILL ZONE.

THE ENEMY

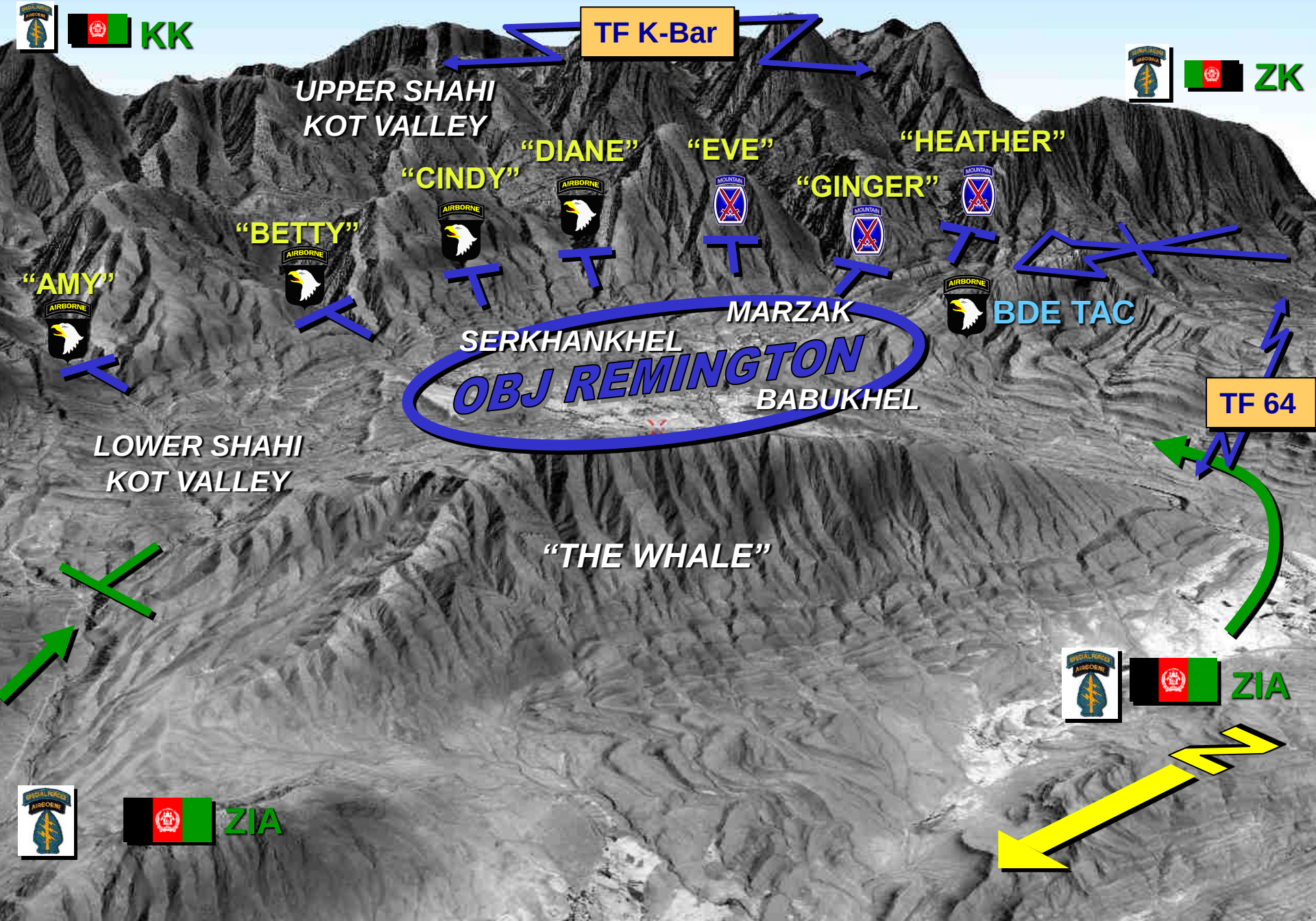
- DShK-38: EMPLOYED WITH EACH FIGHTING POSITION OR BUNKER ORIENTED TOWARDS THE AVENUE OF APPROACH.

THE ENEMY

TF RAKKASAN MISSION

Task Force Rakkasan air assaults H-Hour, D-Day (0200Z, 2 March 2002) into Area of Operations EAGLE to block Al Qaeda withdrawal from Objective REMINGTON in order to enable the combat operation of Commander Zia's Afghan Forces (the main effort). On order, Task Force Rakkasan assists Afghan Forces to block Al Qaeda escape routes into Pakistan to complete the destruction of the enemy in Area of Operations EAGLE. On order, redeploys to Kandahar Airfield to prepare for future operations.

CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION



PRIOR TO D-DAY

- REFINEMENT OF PLAN
- REHEARSALS
- BATTLE DRILLS
- INDIVIDUAL TRAINING
- FLY-AWAY REHEARSAL

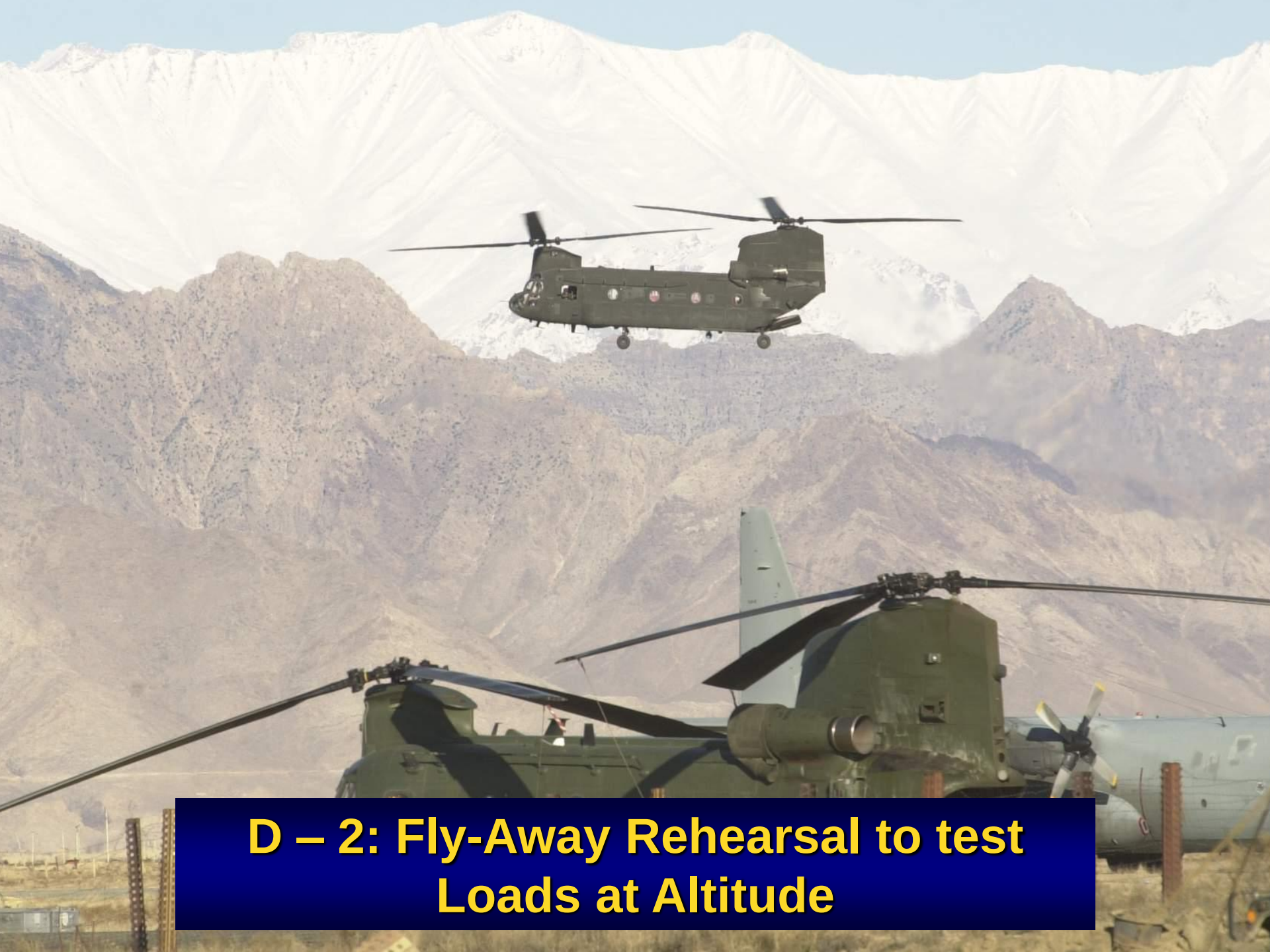
D – 4: Division Back-Brief

D – 2: Sub-Unit Rehearsal

D – 2: Pre-Combat Preparations

D – 2: Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

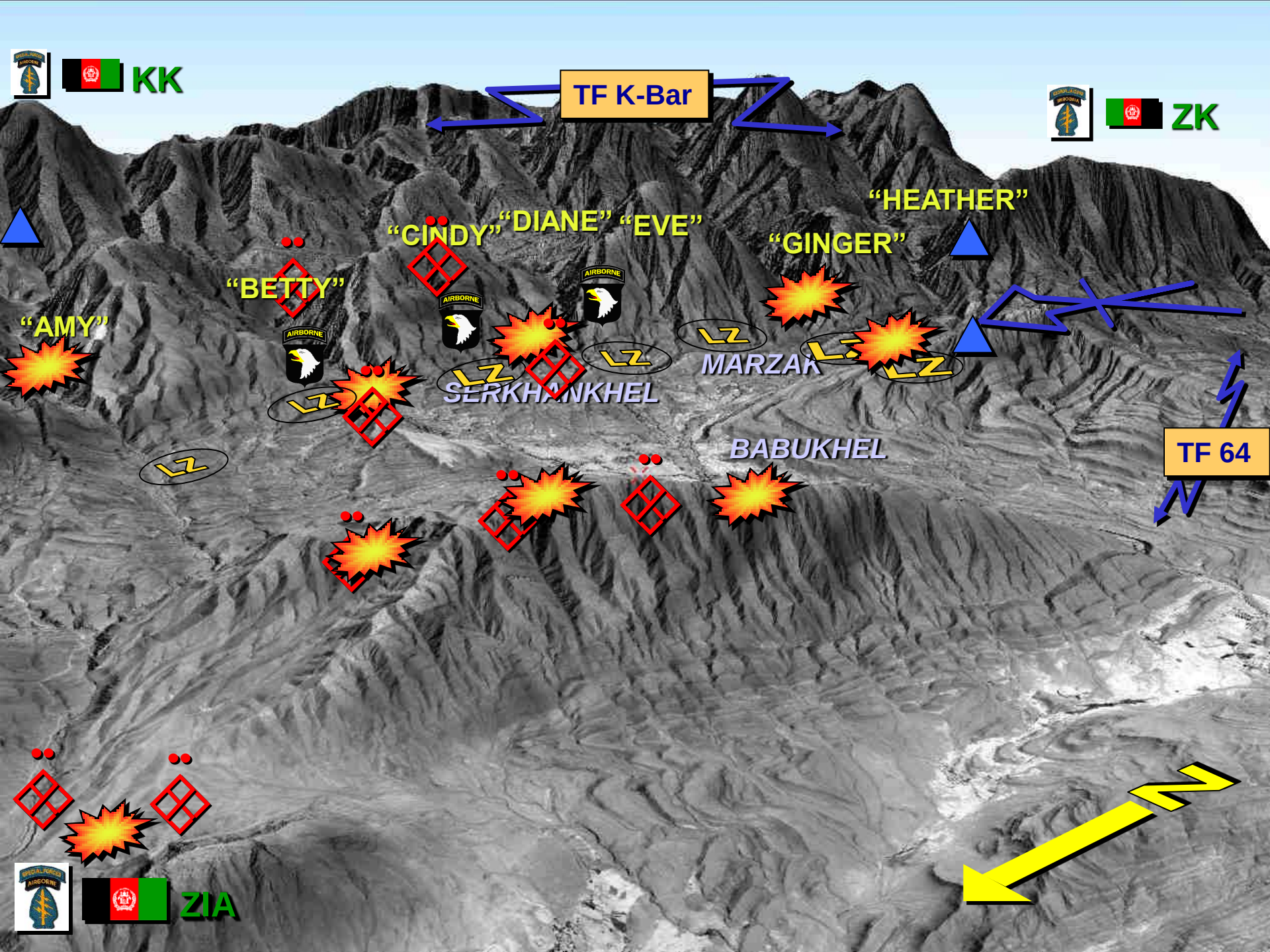
D – 2: TF RAKKASAN Conducts Fly-Away Rehearsal



D – 2: Fly-Away Rehearsal to test Loads at Altitude

D - Day: Lift 1, Serial 1
waits to board aircraft

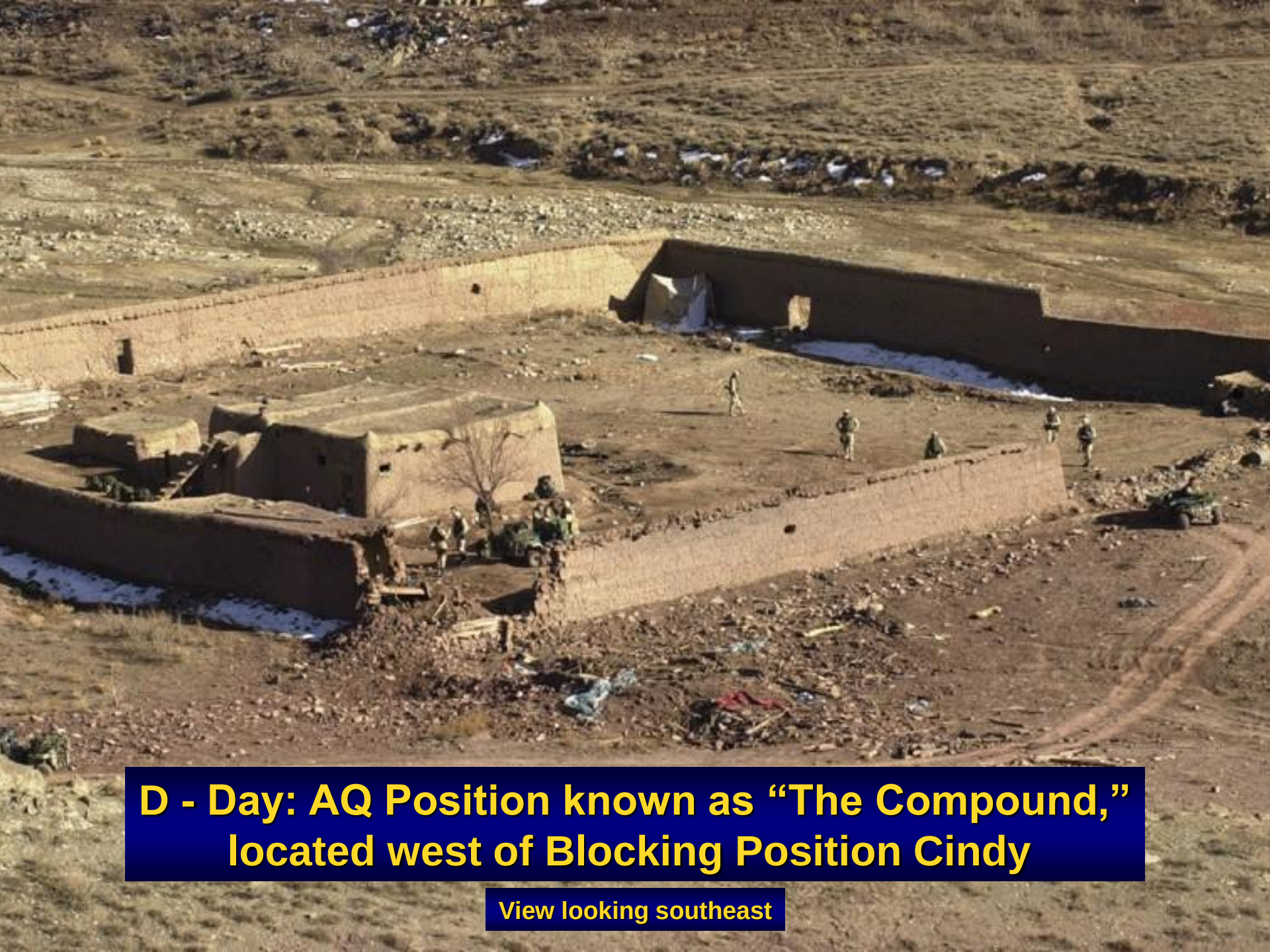
D - Day: Lift 1, Serial 1 prepares to take off

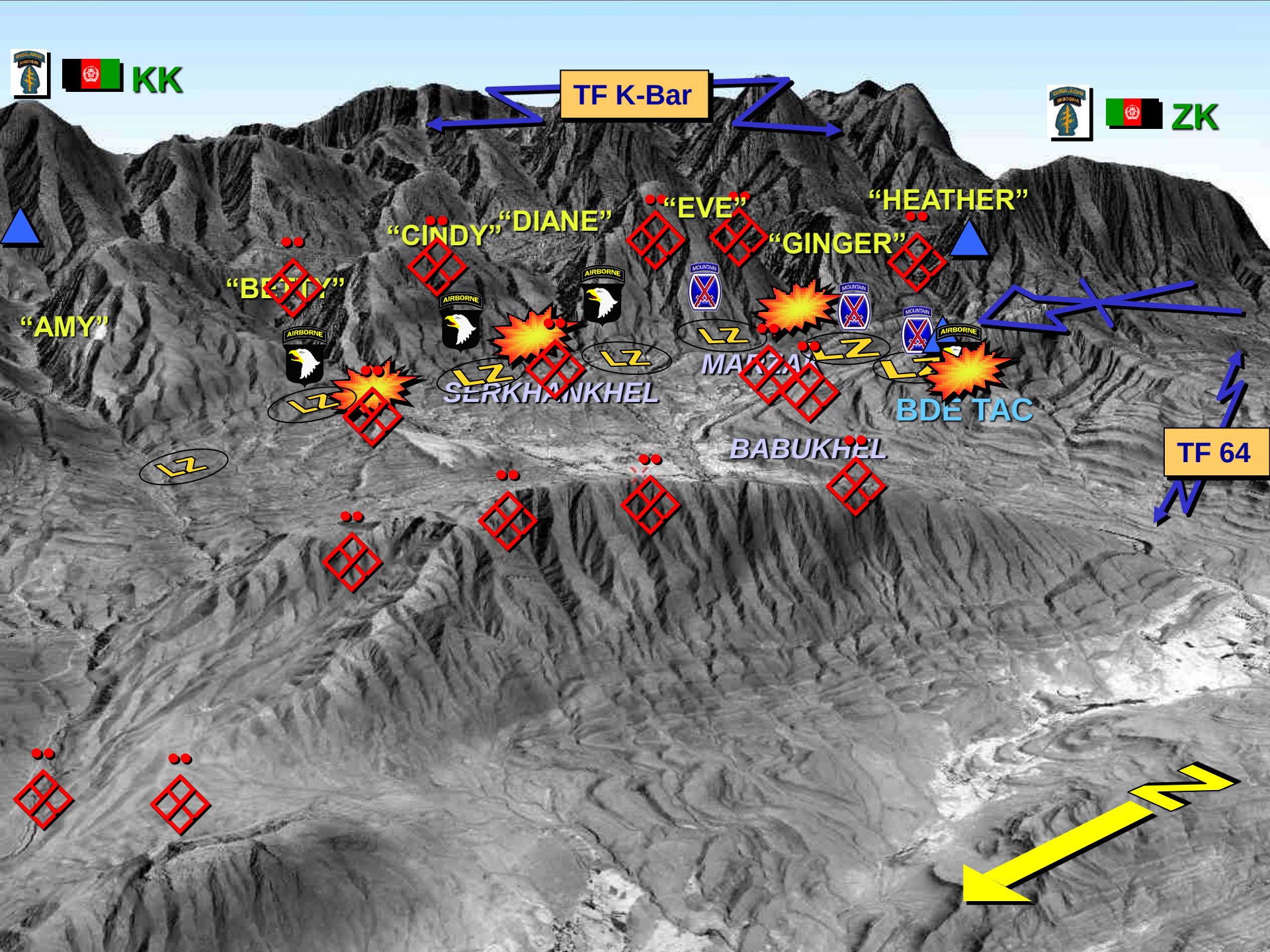

KK
TF K-Bar
ZK
"HEATHER"
"CINDY"
"DIANE"
"EVE"
"GINGER"
"BETTY"
"AMY"
AIRBORNE
LZ
MARZAK
SERKHANKHEL
BABUKHEL
TF 64
N
ZIA

D - Day: Fire and Maneuver

D - Day: A Forward Observer reports his location

D - Day: An Apache moves into position to answer a call for support


D - Day: AQ Position known as “The Compound,”
located west of Blocking Position Cindy
View looking southeast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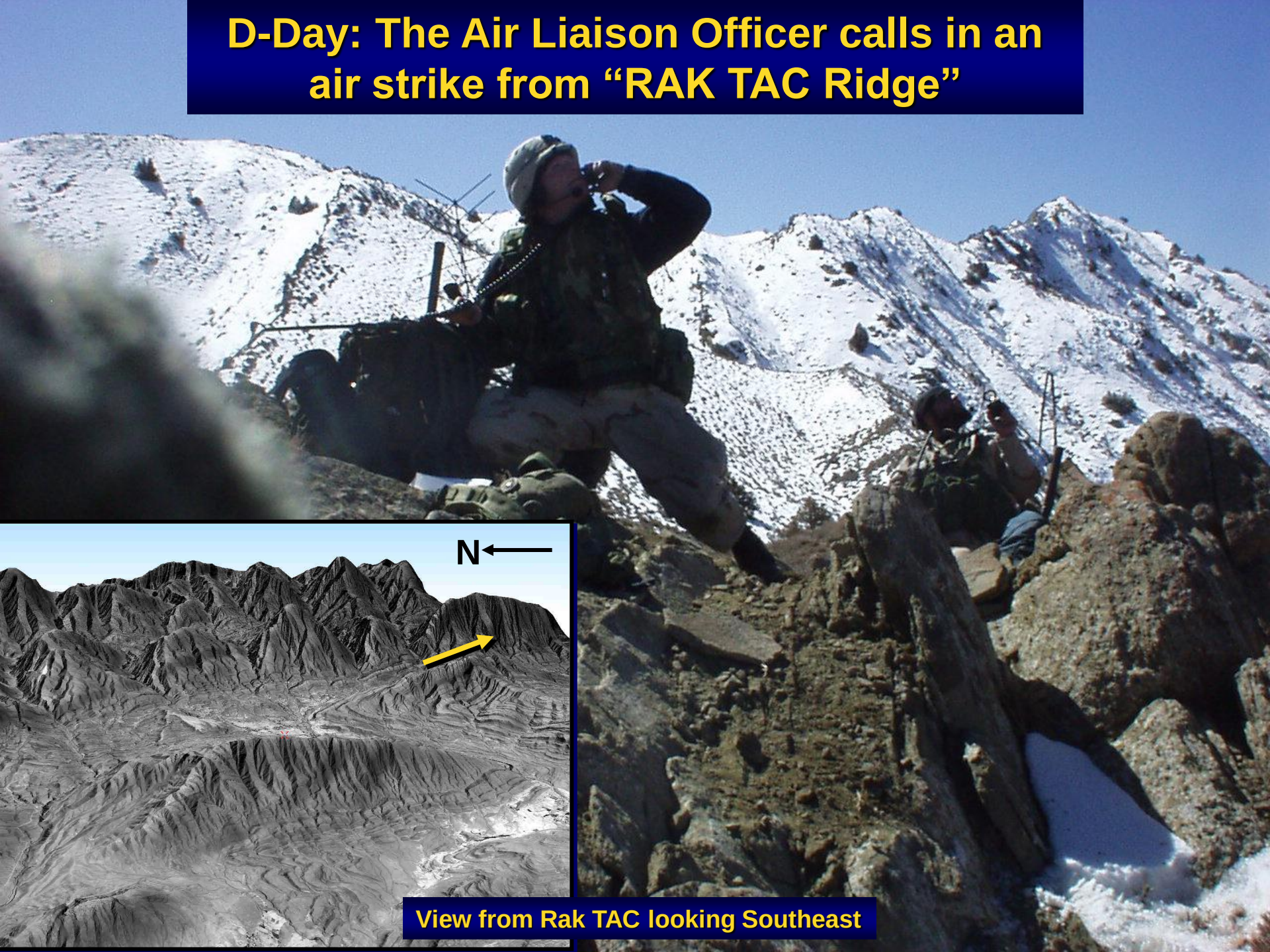
D-Day: Command and Control aircraft landing at “RAK TAC Ridge”

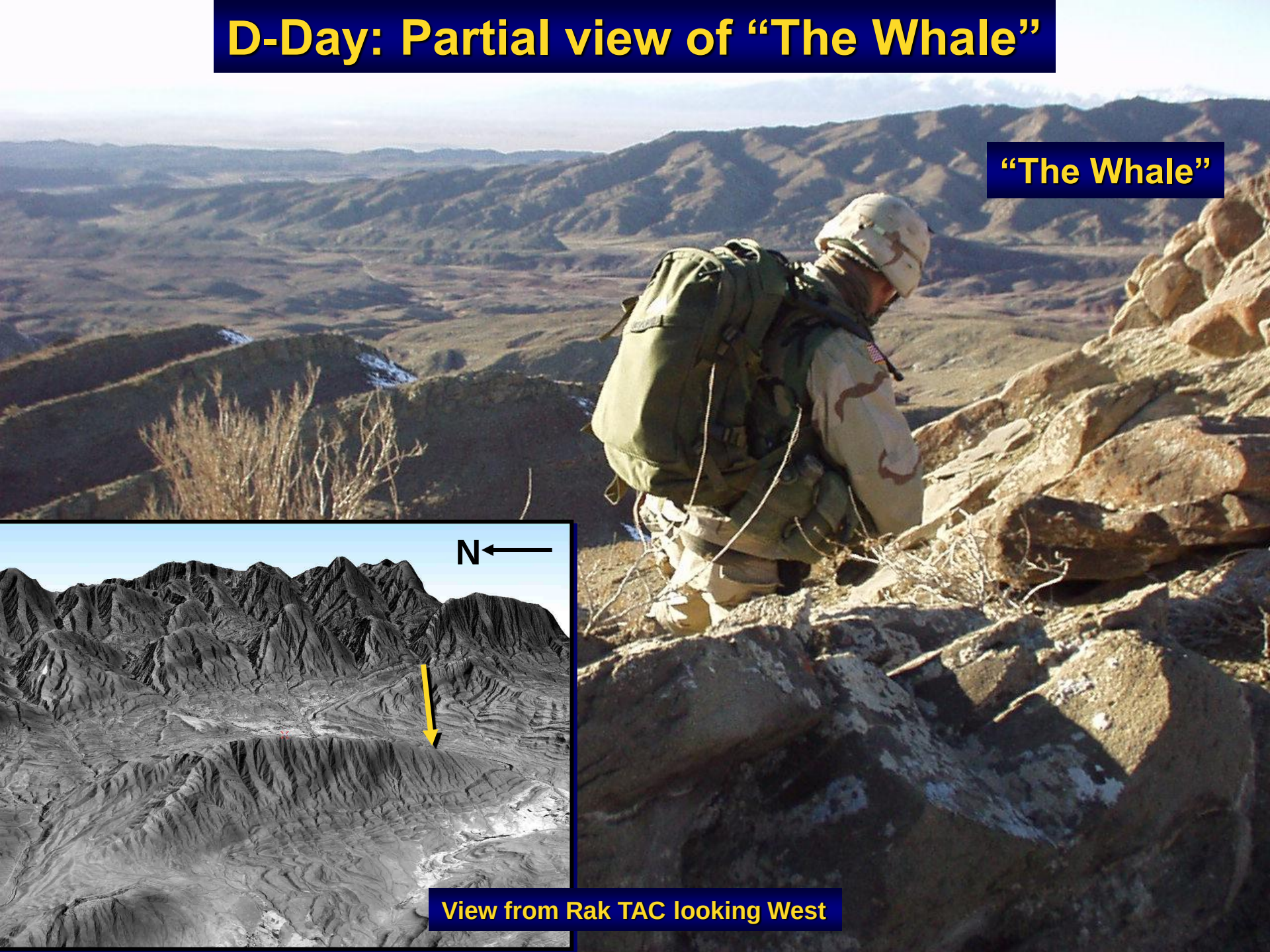
View from Rak TAC looking Northeast

D-Day: The Air Liaison Officer calls in an air strike from “RAK TAC Ridge”

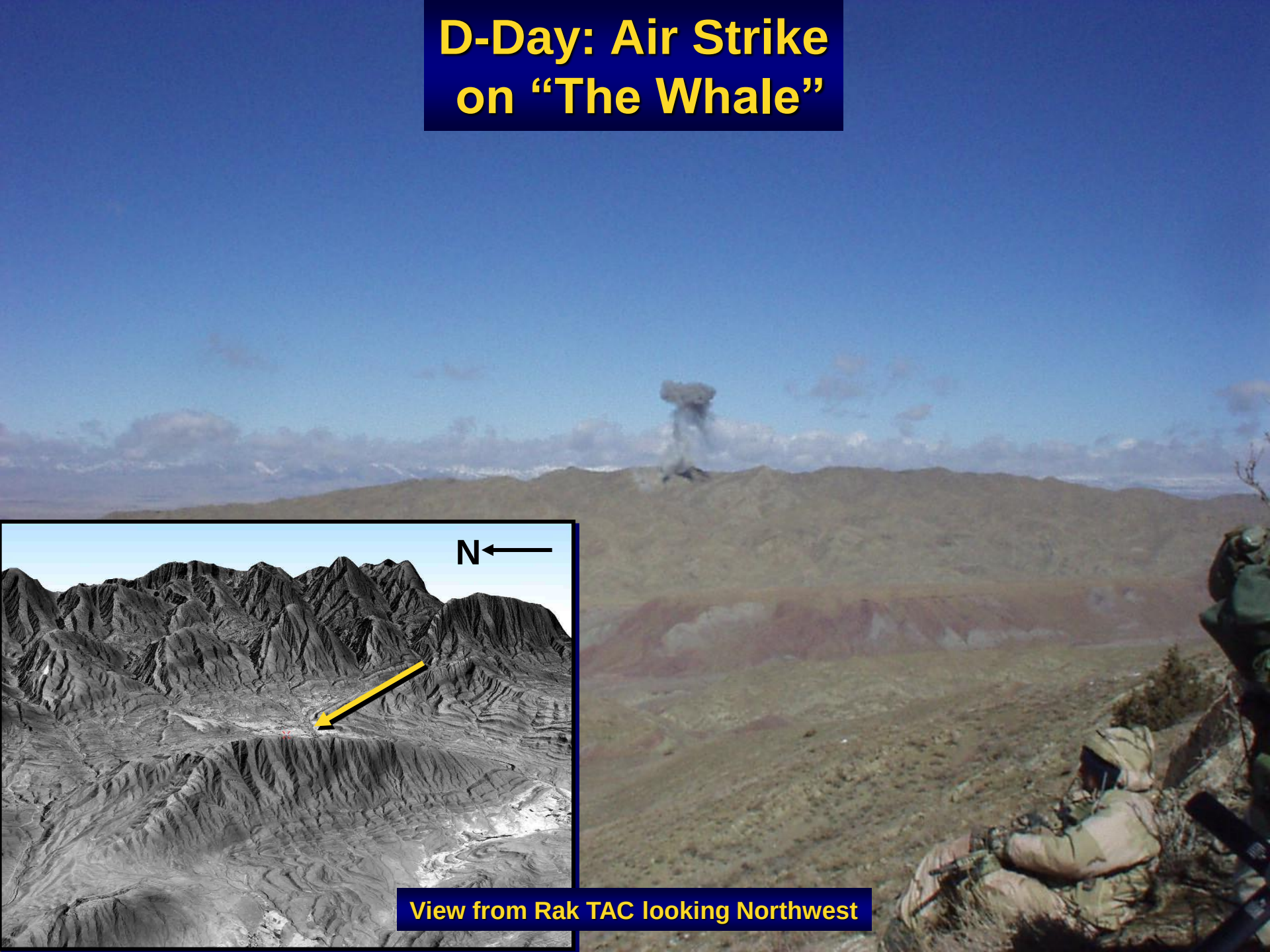


View from Rak TAC looking Southeast

D-Day: Partial view of “The Whale”

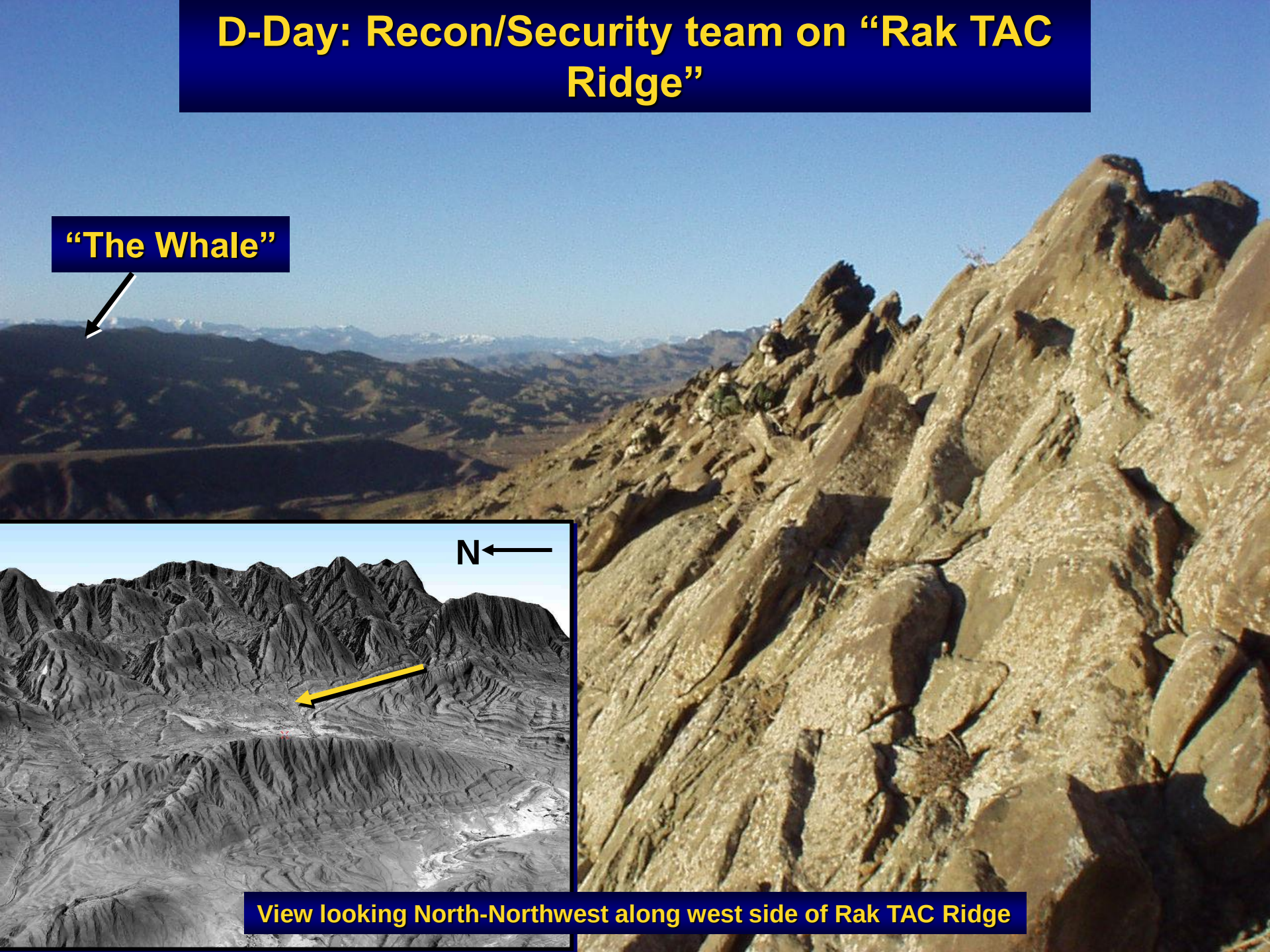


D-Day: Air Strike on “The Whale”



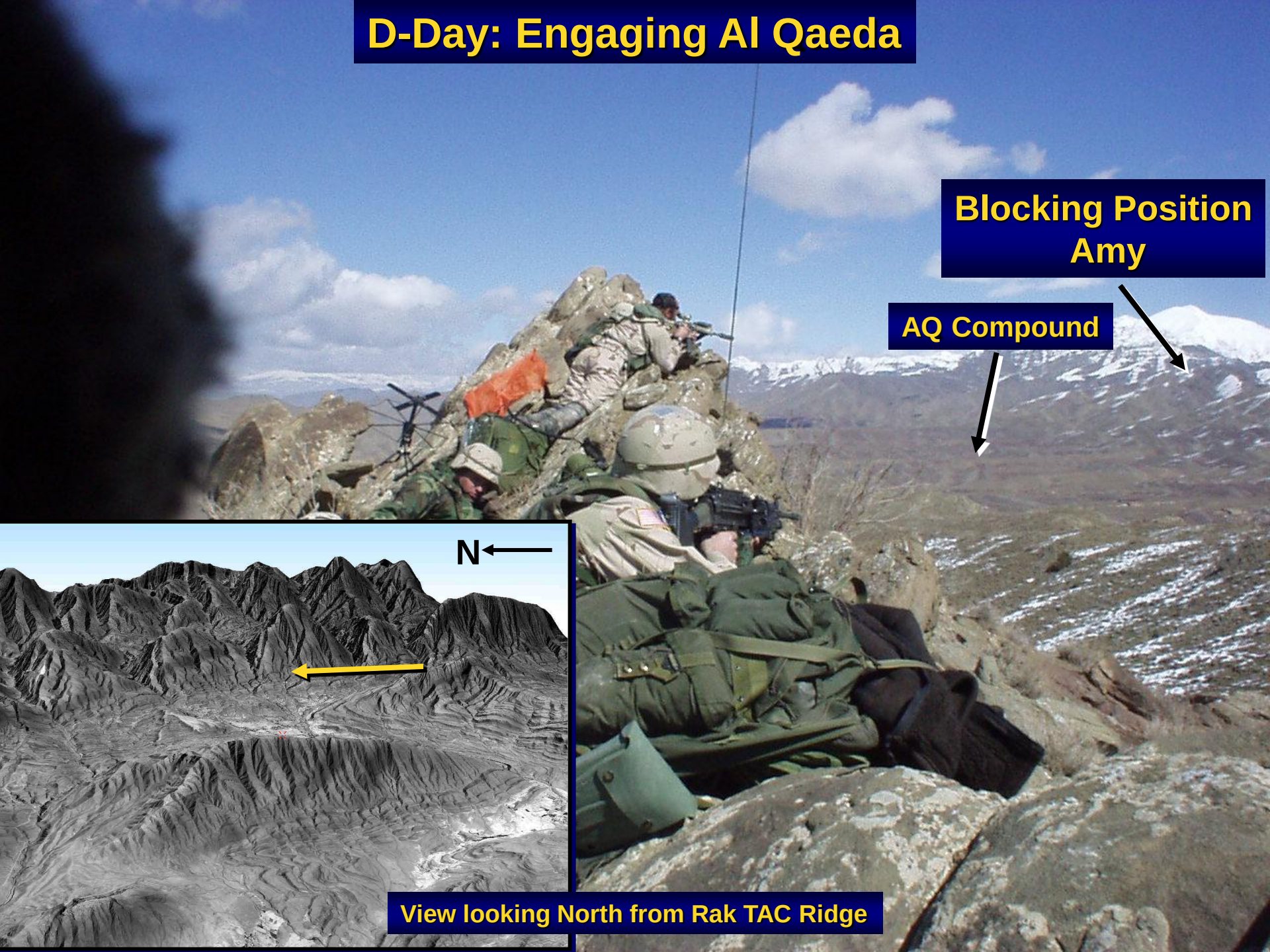
View from Rak TAC looking Northwest

D-Day: Recon/Security team on “Rak TAC Ridge”



View looking North-Northwest along west side of Rak TAC Ridge

D-Day: Engaging Al Qaeda



D-Day: Air strike into “Ginger Pass”

D + 1: CH-47s returning to Bagram after successful insertion of 1-187

D + 2: Reoccupying Blocking Position Amy

View looking east into “Amy Pass”

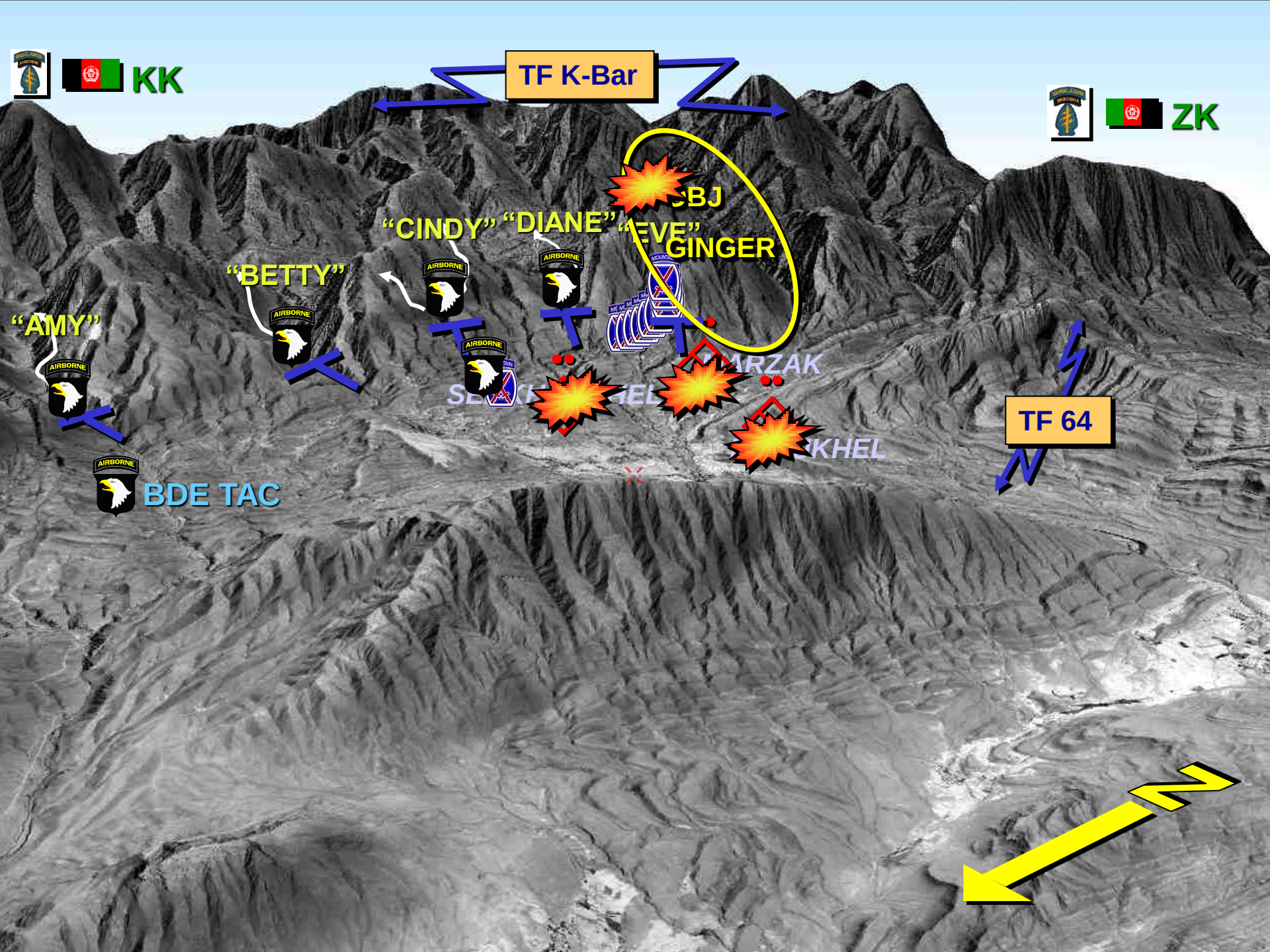
D + 2: Air Defense Gun found during Exploitation of Blocking Position Amy

D + 2: The “Gator” is Introduced to combat

D + 2: Scanning the ridgeline for enemy observation posts

D + 3: CH-47D dropping off 81mm mortars vic 1-187 BN TAC

D + 3: Troops exit aircraft while air strike goes into Serkhankhel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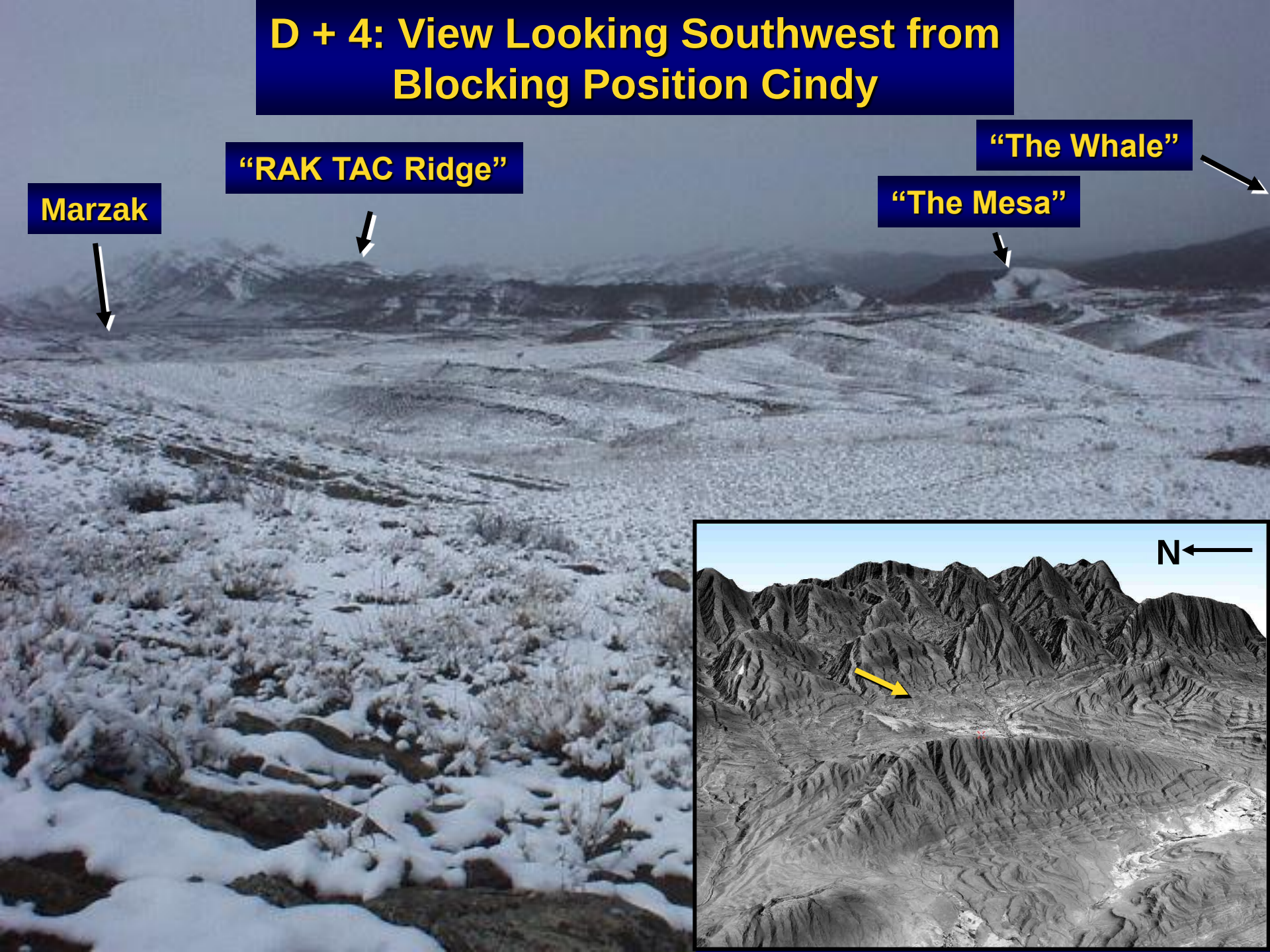
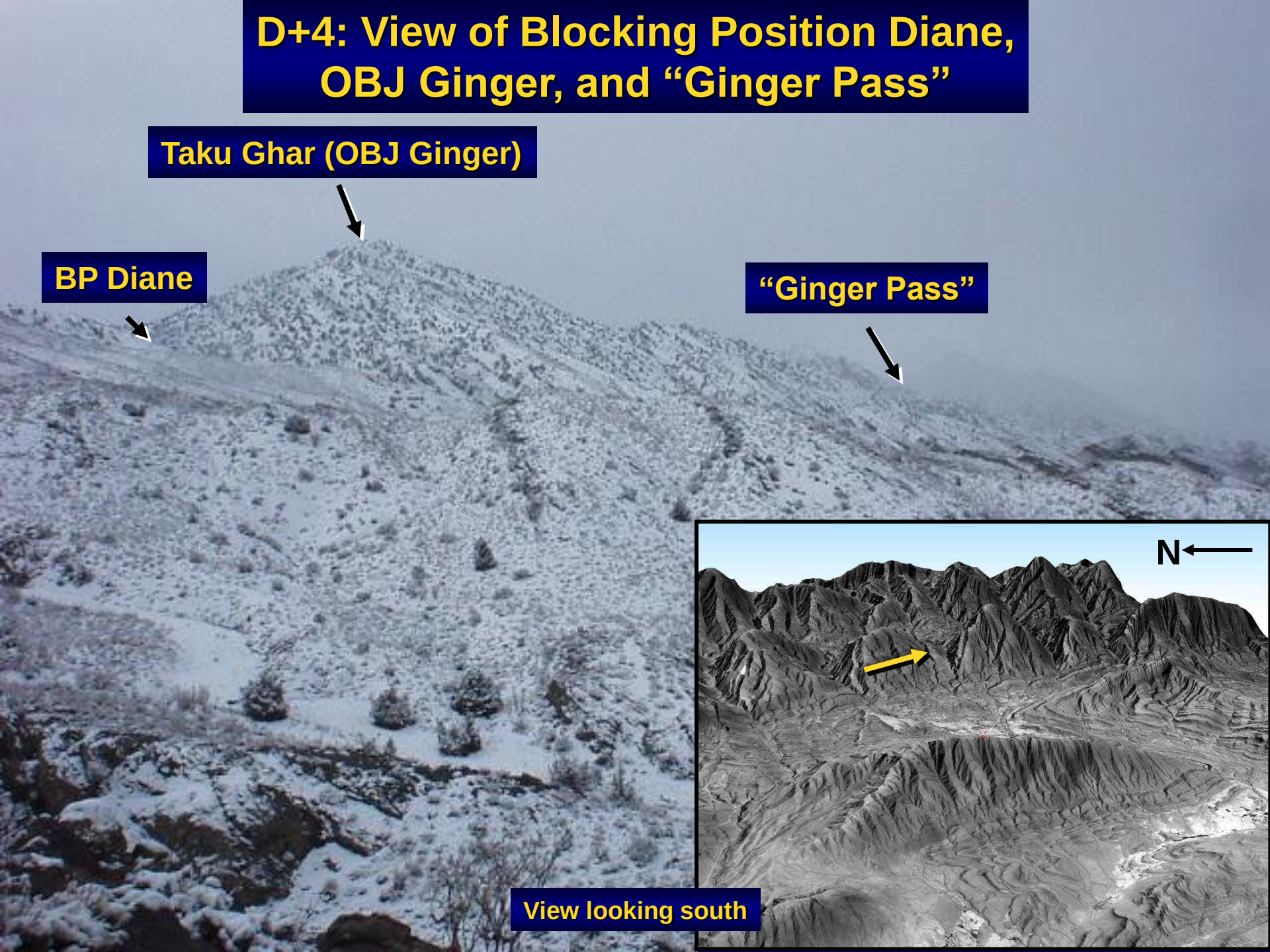
TF 64
BDE TAC
N

D + 4: A CH-47D slinging in supplies

D + 4: View Looking Southwest from Blocking Position Cindy



D+4: View of Blocking Position Diane, OBJ Ginger, and "Ginger Pass"



D+6: Firepower

D + 6: Air strike
into Serkhankhel

D + 6: Air strike
on Babukhel

D + 9: Apaches engage targets In Serkhankhel

D+11: Insertion of 3PPCLI for Operation Harpoon

D + 11: Elements of 3PPCLI
land vicinity of “The Whale”

D + 11: 3PPCLI conducts
sweep of “The Whale”

D + 11: 3PPCLI riflemen
provide overwatch of a cave

D + 13: View looking southwest from the top of “The Whale”

D + 14: C Co, 3PPCLI loads CH-47 for return to Bagram

LESSONS LEARNED

- MUST HAVE OVER-THE-HORIZON COMMS FOR OUR AIRCRAFT AND C2 NODES.
- NEED INTRA-THEATER FIXED-WING RESUPPLY CAPABILITY DEDICATED TO THE AIR ASSAULT FORCE.
- PLAN AND RESOURCE FOR FIRE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS ALL WEATHER AND ALL TERRAIN.
- NEED THE LIGHT WEIGHT COUNTER-MORTAR RADAR FOR PORTABLE, OMNI-DIRECTIONAL CAPABILITY.
- C2 AIRCRAFT (FIXED OR ROTARY-WING) IS A MUST-HAVE.
- NEED LIGHT WEIGHT MOBILITY ONCE ON GROUND.
- EMBEDDED MEDIA ACCURATELY PORTRAY THE ARMY STORY.
- CONTINUE TO PRACTICE INTEROPERABILITY BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES.
- OPERATION WAS A VALIDATION OF THE ARMY'S CTCs.

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- FIRST CONVENTIONAL BATTLE OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM – AND LARGEST
- LARGEST AND LONGEST-DURATION LIGHT-INFANTRY ENGAGEMENT SINCE VIET NAM
- HIGHEST-ALTITUDE LAND BATTLE IN U.S. HISTORY
- 14 COMBAT AIR ASSAULTS PERFORMED DURING THE OPERATION WITHOUT THE LOSS OF A SINGLE SOLDIER OR AIRFRAME IN TASK FORCE RAKKASAN – 1,411 SOLDIERS INSERTED, 1,411 EXTRACTED
- FIRST CANADIAN GROUND COMBAT SINCE KOREA
- OPERATION WAS UNDERTAKEN BY A COALITION OF SEVEN COUNTRIES
- CLOSE COMBAT ATTACK MISSIONS WITH APACHE HELICOPTERS
- PROOF OF SURVIVABILTY AND LETHALITY OF APACHE AIRFRAME
- INTRODUCTION OF THE ‘M-GATOR’ TO COMBAT IN AIR-MECHANIZED ROLE
- TRUE JOINT FIGHT: USA, USAF, USN, USMC, AND SOF

TF RAKKASAN

"I do not think we fully appreciated how devastating Anaconda was. I do not think the enemy is going to try to attack and take on the strongest military power in the Western World."

- Brigadier Roger Lane, CDR, UK Royal Marines